



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

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Number of Rigs Drilling In Deepwater Gulf Reaches Record High of 42

The number of rigs drilling in deepwater in the Gulf of Mexico rose to a record high of 42 this week, according to the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service.

MMS Acting Director Tom Kitsos commented that "This level of deepwater oil and gas activity illustrates the tremendous level of industry interest in the deepwater portion of the Gulf of Mexico. Last year began with 26 rigs working in deepwater, but that number continued to rise. By the end of the year, there were a record 40 rigs drilling in the deep waters of the Gulf. Now, just four months into 2001, a new record has been set." MMS defines deepwater as 1,000 feet of water or greater. Of the 42 wells drilling in deepwater, 36 of them were in 1,500 feet of water or greater.

Kitsos also noted that "the number of wells being drilled in the so called ultra-deep water -- those in 5,000 feet of water or greater -- continues to grow significantly. Currently, there are eight wells being drilled in water depths of 5,000 feet or greater." The eight companies operating and the water depths are

| Operator | Water-Depth |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| TotalFinaElf | 7,549 feet |
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| BP | 6,960 feet |
| Unocal | 6,736 feet |
| Murphy E&P | 5,880 feet |
| Dominion E&P | 5,610 feet |
| Amoco | 5,317 feet |
| Shell Deepwater | 5,150 feet |

For additional information about deepwater activity, visit the MMS Gulf of Mexico regional website at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/offshore/deepwtr.html>.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These collections totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>